

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A purification method **for separating minicells from parent bacterial cells** that comprises **(a) providing a sample enriched for minicells, wherein said minicells are approximately 0.4 μ m in diameter, (a) (b)** subjecting a **said sample enriched for minicells** to a condition selected from the group consisting of a stress-inducing osmotic condition, an anaerobic condition and a nutrient-limiting condition, which condition induces parent bacterial cells to adopt a filamentous form, and then **(b) (c)** filtering said sample, ~~wherein said filtering passes such that~~ minicells but not filamentous parent bacterial cells **pass, such that whereby** said method yields a purified composition of minicells **free of parent bacterial cells**.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein said sample is incubated in a hypertonic medium.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step is a dead-end filtration with a filter employing a pore size of about 0.45 μ m.

13-26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step comprises cross-flow filtration.

28. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step comprises a serial filtration process that combines cross-flow filtration and dead-end filtration.

29. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 28, wherein the filtering step employs at least one filter employing a pore size less than or equal to about 0.2 μ m.

30. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 28, wherein the filtering step employs at least one filter employing a pore size greater than or equal to about 0.45 μm .

31. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 28, wherein said serial filtration process is preceded by differential centrifugation.

32. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step employs at least one filter employing a pore size less than or equal to about 0.2 μm .

33. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the filtering step employs at least one filter employing a pore size greater than or equal to about 0.45 μm .

34. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a step of subjecting the minicells to density gradient centrifugation in a biologically compatible medium.

35. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 34, further comprising a step of subjecting the minicells to differential centrifugation.

36. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein said medium is isotonic and non-toxic.

37. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein said medium consists essentially of iodixanol and water.

38. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a step of treating said purified composition of minicells with an antibiotic.

39. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9, further comprising a step of removing free endotoxin from said purified composition of minicells.

40. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein said step of removing free endotoxin employs anti-Lipid A antibodies.

41. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein the purified composition of minicells contains fewer than about 1 contaminating parent bacterial cell per 10^8 , 10^9 , 10^{10} or 10^{11} minicells.

42. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein the purified composition of minicells contains fewer than about 1 contaminating parent bacterial cell per 10^9 minicells.

43. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein the purified composition of minicells contains fewer than about 1 contaminating parent bacterial cell per 10^{10} minicells.

44. (New) A method according to claim 9, wherein the purified composition of minicells contains fewer than about 1 contaminating parent bacterial cell per 10^{11} minicells.